



**Finance**

**USE OF GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD**

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS INSTRUCTION IS MANDATORY**

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This instruction outlines appropriate use of the government-sponsored, contractor-issued travel card (hereafter referred to as "GTC"). This instruction applies to personnel assigned to Air University, the 42d Air Base Wing and any tenant unit at Maxwell Air Force Base, including Gunter Annex. This instruction applies to the use of the Bank of America GTC and to any other credit card or program intended as a replacement for the Bank of America GTC. Commanders are responsible to ensure compliance with this instruction. Violations are punishable under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

**SUMMARY OF REVISIONS**

**This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed.** This revision establishes policy for mandatory GTC use, defines infrequent travelers, and provides program management attachments.

**1. Background.** The Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998 stipulates the GTC shall be furnished to US Government personnel (civilian and military) to defray expenses associated with official business travel. Charges to the GTC are the sole responsibility of the individual cardholder. The General Services Administration (GSA) awards and administers a master contract for the GTC program.

**2. Policy.** The GTC is essential for the efficient administration of official government business. GTC use is required, unless otherwise exempted. Therefore, it is necessary for cardholders to maintain their account in good standing. Although a traveler may be required to use the GTC, failure to use the card shall not be a basis for refusing to reimburse the traveler for otherwise appropriate charges. However, such failure shall subject the cardholder to appropriate administrative and disciplinary action. Misuse occurs when the cardholder uses the GTC for other than government business, fails to pay account charges when due, and violates the

agreement between the cardholder and GTC contractor. **GTC use for personal expenses is not authorized and subjects the cardholder to disciplinary action.**

**3. Infrequent Travelers.** Infrequent travelers are those who travel two or less times per year. Infrequent travelers are not required to obtain a GTC and are identified by the unit agency program coordinator (APC) and unit commander. However, if an infrequent traveler's commander determines he or she requires a GTC, then this instruction shall apply to that cardholder.

3.1. Payment Methods Authorized When Exempted. When a GTC exemption is granted, one of the following methods may be authorized for travel expense payment:

3.1.1. Personal Funds. Includes cash or a personal charge card.

3.1.2. Travel Advances. Advances are made via electronic funds transfer (EFT). Travel orders and a unit commander letter stating the member is an infrequent traveler (attachment 2) must be delivered to the Finance office 5 business days *before* travel begins to expedite timely processing.

3.1.3. Transportation. Commercially procured travel (through the Commercial Travel Office [CTO]) may be purchased on a centrally billed account (CBA). A letter from the unit commander stating the member is an infrequent traveler (attachment 1) must be completed and accompany the travel orders or the appropriate item marked on the back of the orders.

**4. Mandatory Uses.** The GTC may be used only for official travel and travel-related charges incurred while on temporary duty (TDY) status. The cardholder may not charge other persons expenses, except for dependents stated on the travel orders. The GTC is further restricted as follows:

4.1. Transportation Expenses. Cardholders must charge airfare and ground transportation costs on the GTC while performing official TDY duties. This includes rental car fees.

4.2. Lodging Expenses. Cardholders must charge lodging expenses incurred en route and at the destination.

**5. Authorized Uses.** The GTC may be used for official travel and travel-related charges incurred while on a permanent change of station (PCS) status.

5.1. Meals. Cardholders may charge meals consumed while performing official government duties.

5.2. Cash Advances. Cash advances should be limited to those expenses that cannot be charged to the GTC. Cardholders may obtain cash advances from automatic teller machines (ATM) that do not exceed the authorized per diem for the travel. Cardholders will not obtain cash advances earlier than 3 days before commencing travel. (As a reminder, the cardholder can be reimbursed for ATM and service fees charged by the GTC contractor.)

5.3. Incidentals. Incidental expenses are authorized when such costs are incurred during official travel. Non-reimbursable incidental travel expenses, such as personal telephone calls and beverages may be charged to the GTC when part of a room billing or meal, and are reasonable.

5.4. Registration Fees. Registration fees may be paid with the GTC if authorized on the traveler's orders. If contractors cannot accept credit cards, an ATM cash advance may be obtained to purchase a money order in the amount of the registration fee.

**6. Split Disbursements.** Travelers are highly encouraged to use split disbursement when filing their travel voucher. This ensures the bank is paid timely and the cardholder does not have to worry about making the payment. Split disbursement is the default payment option, unless the cardholder specifies otherwise.

**7. Misuse.** Failure to observe the following requirements constitutes misuse and subjects the cardholder to appropriate disciplinary action.

7.1. Account Delinquency. Cardholders must pay the entire account balance within 30 days of the billing date. Cardholders who receive a delinquency notice must pay the entire balance within 5 days of receipt. Any installment agreement between the GTC contractor and the cardholder for paying a delinquent account will not excuse the cardholder from disciplinary actions.

7.2. Late Fees. Late fees accrued due to the cardholder's failure to pay are *not* reimbursable.

7.3. Pay Withholding. The Travel Card Contractor may begin official collection action after the account becomes 120 days delinquent. Collection action may include credit bureau notification of the employee's failure to pay and garnishment of the employee's pay.

7.4 Unauthorized Use. Using the GTC for other than official travel related expenses or beyond the restrictions outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 above is unauthorized use. **Use of the GTC exceeding these limitations is misuse and not authorized.**

**8. Extended TDYs.** Cardholders performing extended TDYs (over 45 days) are not relieved from paying the balance within 30 days. It is the cardholder's responsibility to make sure a copy of the bill is received at the TDY location or make other arrangements to keep the account in good standing.

8.1. Accrual Payments. Accrual payments are available and recommended for extended TDYs. Members accomplish this by visiting the finance office with three copies of their official travel orders. Payments will be calculated at 100% of the anticipated per diem rate for the deployed location and paid every 30 days until deployment is completed. This applies to military and civilian DoD employees.

8.2. Accrual Payments for Members at TDY Location. If members need accrual payments made and are already at their TDY location, they can complete the accrual package and fax it back to the finance office.

## **9. Program Administration.**

9.1. Issuing Cards. Unit APCs brief prospective cardholders before giving them an agreement. This briefing consists of providing the prospective cardholder with a copy of this instruction, answering any questions the prospective cardholder may have, and having the prospective cardholder complete the Statement of Understanding (attachment 3). The completed Statement of Understanding is maintained in the cardholder's personal information file or with the unit APC.

9.2. Maintaining Cards. The GTC is intended for use only with official government travel. Therefore, unit commanders may, at their discretion, require cardholders to maintain their cards in the unit until they are required to perform official travel. If cards are maintained in the unit, the commander ensures there is adequate security and accountability. Cards are destroyed or returned to the GTC contractor upon separation or retirement from the Air Force.

9.3. Orders to Stop Use. Commanders, supervisors, or first sergeants may order a cardholder to stop using the GTC when any suspected misuse is discovered. Commanders may also instruct the unit APC to cancel any member's card. Orders to stop use must be in writing.

9.4. Counseling. A cardholder is counseled whenever misuse occurs. Commanders and first sergeants should consider whether a formal written counseling is appropriate. Commanders and first sergeants should also consider referring cardholders to the Military Family Support Center for financial counseling when misuse of the GTC indicates an underlying financial problem. Counseling under this provision is not a substitute for and does not preclude initiation of appropriate disciplinary action, including non-judicial punishment or trial by court-martial.

MICHAEL E. OUTTEN, Colonel, USAF  
Director, Financial Management

## **Attachment 1**

### **GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **References**

DoD 7000.14-R, *Financial Management Regulation, Volume 9, Travel Policy and Procedures*  
*Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998*

#### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

**APC**—Agency Program Coordinator  
**ATM**—Automatic Teller Machine  
**CBA**—Centrally Billed Account  
**CTO**—Commercial Travel Office  
**DoD**—Department of Defense  
**EFT**—Electronic Funds Transfer  
**GSA**—General Services Administration  
**GTC**—Government Travel Card  
**PCS**—Permanent Change of Station  
**TDY**—Temporary Duty  
**UCMJ**—Uniform Code of Military Justice  
**US**—United States

## Attachment 2

## COMMANDER'S INFREQUENT TRAVELER LETTER

[date]

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMERCIAL TRAVEL OFFICE (CTO)  
LODGING OFFICE  
FINANCE OFFICE

FROM: UNIT/CC

SUBJECT: Traveler Not Required to Use the Government Travel Card (GTC)

1. Due to changes in the GTC contract between DoD and Bank of America, infrequent travelers are no longer required to obtain or use the GTC for the mandatory purchases of airline tickets, rental cars or lodging, or for any other costs.
2. As defined in volume 9 of the *DoD Financial Management Regulation*, an infrequent traveler is "one who travels two or less times per year".
3. Unit level Agency Program Coordinators (APC) shall be responsible for identifying infrequent travelers. Accounts of infrequent travelers are cancelled at the discretion of the traveler's supervisor and or commander.
4. The following methods of payment may be used.
  - a. Place travel tickets on a centrally billed account (CBA).
  - b. Rental car reservations may be made using a personal credit card.
  - c. Lodging may be paid with a personal credit card or cash.
5. The individual below has been identified as an infrequent traveler and is not required to use a GTC.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Because the traveler does not have a GTC, this individual is authorized a travel advance of \$\_\_\_\_\_. (*Amount should not exceed 80% of expected reimbursement*)
7. If there are any questions, contact the unit APC [APC name] at DSN \_\_\_\_\_.

[commander's signature block]

**Attachment 3****DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE – AIR FORCE – MAXWELL/GUNTER AFB  
STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING – GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD PROGRAM**

I certify I have read the attached Government Travel Card policy and procedures. I understand the Government Travel Card program is designed to improve the management and control of government travel and, thereby, promote the efficiency of the Federal Service. I also understand I am authorized to use the card *only* for those necessary and reasonable expenses incurred by me for official travel. I will abide by these instructions issued by the Department of Defense (DoD).

The above limitation on card usage also applies to automatic teller machine (ATM) withdrawals. The amount of cash withdrawals may not exceed \$500 (standard) or \$200 (restricted) per billing cycle. If my account is not delinquent and my travel orders authorize a larger advance, I can request an increase in the ATM limit through the agency program coordinator (APC). I will, however, endeavor to charge expenses to the account wherever feasible rather than use cash withdrawals.

I understand the issuance of this charge card to me is an extension of the employee-employer relationship and that I am being specifically directed to (applicants must initial all provisions):

- Abide by all rules and regulations with respect to charge card. \_\_\_\_\_
- Use charge card only for official travel. \_\_\_\_\_
- Pay all charges upon notification of payment due. \_\_\_\_\_
- Notify APC of any problems with respect to usage of charge card. \_\_\_\_\_
- Notify card contractor and APC if charge card is lost or stolen. \_\_\_\_\_
- Relinquish card to APC upon retirement or separation from Air Force. \_\_\_\_\_

I also understand failure on my part to abide by these rules or otherwise misuse the card may result in disciplinary action being taken against me. I also acknowledge the right of the travel card contractor and/or APC to revoke or suspend my travel card privileges if I fail to abide by the terms of this agreement or the agreement I have signed with the travel card contractor.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Applicant's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Commander's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Applicant's Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Commander's Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Applicant's Series/Grade/Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Commander's Series/Grade/Title)

NOTE: The Government Travel Card application cannot be processed without this form on file.